

CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS

The arrests and convictions of conscientious objectors continued during the year. At least four conscientious objectors were convicted for insubordination and received suspended prison sentences. Six individuals refusing to serve both the military and the punitive alternative service were also arrested and detained for short periods.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

In January, an Athens court convicted a blogger of “religious insult”. His 10-month prison sentence was suspended on appeal. The blogger had set up a Facebook page on which he satirized an orthodox monk who had died.

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1. Greece: Frontier of hope and fear - migrants and refugees pushed back at Europe's border (EUR 25/004/2014)
www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR25/004/2014/en
 2. We ask for justice: Europe's failure to protect Roma from Racist Violence (EUR 01/007/2014)
www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR01/007/2014/en
 3. A law unto themselves: A culture of abuse and impunity in the Greek police (EUR 25/005/2014)
www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR25/005/2014/en

GUATEMALA

Republic of Guatemala

Head of state and government: **Otto Pérez Molina**

Impunity continued for genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity carried out during the internal armed conflict between 1960 and 1996. Violence against women and girls remained a concern. People protesting over hydroelectric and mining projects were subject to forced evictions and excessive use of force by the security forces. Guatemala retained the death penalty in law for ordinary crimes. However, no prisoners

were on death row and no death sentences were handed down during the year.

BACKGROUND

Street gangs and drug trafficking cartels contributed to a precarious public security situation. The authorities reported over 5,000 homicides committed during the year.

In June, the former National Director of Police, Erwin Sperisen, was convicted in Switzerland for his role in the extrajudicial execution of seven unarmed prisoners during a police operation in the El Pavón prison in 2006.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

Local human rights organizations reported over 500 killings of women during the year.

In May the Inter-American Court of Human Rights ruled against Guatemala in the case of María Isabel Franco, who was sexually assaulted, tortured and murdered in 2001, at the age of 15. The Court concluded that Guatemala had acted in a discriminatory manner due to María Isabel's gender, and that in the context of pervasive violence against women, the authorities had not acted promptly when María Isabel's mother alerted the police of her daughter's disappearance.

IMPUNITY

The right to truth, justice and reparation for victims of crimes against humanity during the internal armed conflict (1960 to 1996) remained a concern. Former President Efraín Ríos Montt was convicted in May 2013 of committing genocide and crimes against humanity against members of Maya-Ixil Indigenous community during his presidency. The Constitutional Court overturned his conviction 10 days later on a technicality. He had yet to be retried by the end of 2014.

In February, the Attorney General's term was cut short by the Constitutional Court. There were concerns that her removal was the result of her role in ensuring that former President Ríos Montt was brought to trial, and her commitment to investigate human rights

violations that occurred during the internal armed conflict.

In May, Congress passed a non-binding resolution stating that genocide had not occurred during the internal armed conflict. The resolution directly contradicted a 1999 UN investigation which concluded that genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity had occurred during the internal armed conflict, in which 200,000 people were killed and 45,000 people were forcibly disappeared. Over 80% of those killed and disappeared were of Indigenous Maya ethnicity.

In July, Fermín Solano Barrillas, a former member of the armed opposition during the internal armed conflict, was sentenced to 90 years in prison for directing the massacre of 22 people in 1988, in El Aguacate, Chimaltenango department.

LAND DISPUTES

Fearing impacts on their livelihoods, communities continued to oppose existing and proposed hydroelectric and mining projects, and protested against the lack of consultation around these projects.

In May 2013, in response to this opposition, the government proposed a moratorium on the issuing of new mining licences. Yet concerns remained that the proposed legislation to approve mining licences fell short of international standards and did not address Indigenous and rural communities' concerns around lack of consultation and free, prior and informed consent.

In May, local activists occupying a mining site in San José del Golfo, Guatemala department, were forcibly removed by the police. The Office of UN High Commissioner for Human Rights expressed concern at the use of excessive force by the security forces during their removal.

In June, local communities protested against the proposed construction of the Xalalá hydroelectric dam in Alta Verapaz and Quiché departments. In August, three people

from the community of Monte Olivo, Alta Verapaz department were killed. They were reportedly shot by police officers during the forced eviction of a community opposed to the construction of a hydroelectric project in the area. By the end of the year nobody had been held to account for their deaths.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

Attacks, threats and intimidation against human rights defenders and journalists continued during the year.

In August, Gustavo Illescas, a journalist with the Independent Media Centre in Guatemala, was threatened after he reported on police violence during the forced eviction in Monte Olivo (see above). A colleague was detained by masked men and told to convey a threatening message to Gustavo Illescas. The colleague was also beaten and sexually assaulted. By the end of the year nobody had been held to account for his ill-treatment or for the threats against Gustavo Illescas.

GUINEA

Republic of Guinea

Head of state: **Alpha Condé**

Head of government: **Mohamed Said Fofana**

One of the largest Ebola Virus Disease outbreaks since the virus was discovered in 1976 hit the country; many essential provisions remained lacking. Security forces regularly used excessive force against civilians. Journalists were subjected to intimidation. Concerns about poor and inhumane conditions of detention, and torture and other ill-treatment of detainees, were highlighted by the UN Committee against Torture and the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). At the end of the year, a preliminary examination by the Prosecutor